

Arlington's Northeast: People, Paths, and Open Spaces

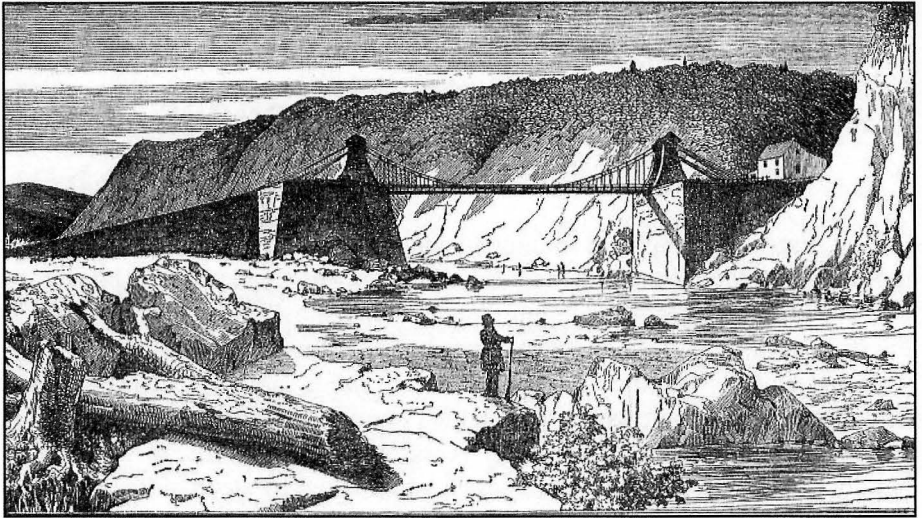
BY CHARLES M. LUDOLPH

From Washington, standing on either Key Bridge or Chain Bridge and looking west, there is an imposing tree-lined 200-foot wall of grey-blue stone cliffs where the western Piedmont Plateau meets the Atlantic Coastal Plain at the river's edge. Little is known of how the Necostin Indians who lived in that wilderness dealt with the Potomac coast, but those same cliffs towered over John Smith's small ship as he reached the Potomac "fall line" in 1608 and then turned back to Jamestown. For 400 years, Arlington's northeast corner was largely unapproachable and impassable—dominated by steep cliffs, rough ravines and dense forests—mostly isolated from Arlington and Washington over the decades by terrain, war, and outlaws.

Urbanization, highways and farms—a kind of 'American Progress'—filled the landscape of most of Arlington, but the Northeast remained mostly a little wilderness. By 1950, when suburbanization finally pushed north of Spout Run and east of Glebe Road, the American ideal of landscape had changed from the original colonial vision of family farms and spiritual revival to habitat and erosion control. For some time in the 1960s, conservation took a seat next to development in Arlington. Now the northeast Arlington's lightly developed landscape has become a contemporary test bed for how to meet the simultaneous demands for development and conservation.

This article is a short physical history covering the roads, streams and parks of Arlington's contemporary Northeast. How did it evolve? What and who explains some of the oddities of the public landscape? How did it come to have more than 600 acres (20 percent of total surface in the Northeast)¹ of mostly wooded greenspace? What is behind the cul-de-sacs? And the evolution of roads to outlots and easements? Where are the missing streams and springs? Why is the tree canopy 65-75 percent in the far Northeast, yet barely 40 percent

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Robert Sears, *Wonders of the World* (1851), page 460

Figure 1: Engraving of Chainbridge over the Potomac, near Georgetown, Washington, D.C.

south of Potomac Overlook Regional Park (PORP)?² This paper is more about today's landscape than the great Northeast landowners. Yet, it is necessary to get to know five lesser known, but very important, historical figures in the Northeast, as they had lasting effect on today's built-environment and landscape. So what and where is the Northeast? The Northeast is that six square mile corner of Arlington that skirts the Potomac on a plateau about 250-300 feet above the river between Key Bridge and Chain Bridge. The western boundary is roughly described by the oldest Arlington roads: Lee Highway and Glebe Road. The first road to penetrate the Northeast was the colonial predecessors of today's Glebe Road.³ Glebe Road connected Alexandria and Little Falls, crossing the square mile of farmland (glebe) that supported the only area churches at that time. Even this 1878 map⁴ (See Figure 2 on page 35.) still shows only three roads in the Northeast—Lee Highway, Glebe Road and Military Road on the western edge pointing west from Georgetown and Alexandria.

After 1861, Military Road—the first major interior wagon track through the Northeast—was built to connect Civil War defenses. Perhaps twenty families owned land and lived in the entire six square miles of the Northeast between 1830 and 1910, while the rest of Arlington County averaged about 5000-6000 people between 1870 and 1910.⁵ This same map shows the first landowners and settlers who took over the wilderness of the original tracts of land granted to the Masons.⁶ These original land-owning families of the Northeast—Grunwell, Lockwood, Vanderwerken, Walker, Rixey, Marcey (Massey on the map), Don-

People of the Northeast

Landscape for most early North American settlers was either urban or farmland. Land development was a high Calvinist value, and Arlington followed in this tradition. But in 1851, Henry David Thoreau changed this vision with his "Walking" lecture in which he says "in Wildness is the Preservation of the World."⁸ Also, in 1851, Nathaniel Hawthorne published "The Scarlet Letter," pitting morally challenged urban Puritans against an innocent woman forced to live in the woods. With the ideas of Thoreau, wilderness became an object of veneration and preservation.⁹ Lincoln established Yosemite National Park in 1864; Central Park and Watkins Glen were opened around 1863, and Rock Creek Park in 1890. Establishing national cemeteries and parks was offered as a way to heal the spirit after the Civil War. Because the land of northeast Arlington was still rough terrain after the Civil War and barely farmland, there was much more room for conservationists to introduce this new American vision of landscape. A new modern generation of owners in the Northeast strove to find a balance between development and conservation. Five landowners in northeast Arlington between 1870 and 1960 stand out for their roles in taking the Northeast from farm to suburban wilderness.

Robert A. Phillips (Resident from 1866-1912). Phillips was a highly successful banker and real estate developer in Washington, DC. He was a leader in Washington society and founded many literary societies. His wife was from an old Huguenot family on the eastern shore. They and their children were leaders of the national Huguenot Society. Phillips was from a Puritan family that originally established Boston in the 1630s.¹⁰ Phillips and his family owned as a single country estate all of the 600 acres that is now Dover, Crystal Springs and Riverwood.

Several generations of the Phillips family lived for the five summer months of the year in his house which was located where the home at 2515 N. Quebec Street is today—the cul-de-sac is the remnant of the Phillips farmyard entrance. His porch veranda surveyed the roofs of Washington and broad pastures, and he called his estate "North Arlington." Likely there was some meaning during Reconstruction to naming his estate "North" Arlington.¹¹ His landscape philosophy reflected the English Calvinist view that wilderness was "evil" and urbanization and farmland were preferred. In 1870, he sold all his standing timber to the Army; thus, his square mile remains with only a modest tree canopy today. He and his children stayed on the land between Windy Run and Marcey Creek from 1866 into the 1930s. He developed and sold the pieces that fronted the Potomac. He sold Marcey Canyon in 1890 as a potential site for a tourist and amusement park, like Watkins Glen in New York.¹² His Washington society friends reached the estate from Military Road and a private

horse trail or, more frequently, by hiking up what is now Randolph Street along the old Marcey Creek Ravine from the Potomac.

Crandall Mackey (Resident from 1897-1940s). Mackey was elected Commonwealth Attorney for Arlington in 1903. By 1900, Arlington had recovered from the devastation of the Civil War occupation, but not so in the Northeast. Development in the Northeast was blocked by lawlessness in Rosslyn. Rosslyn (the gateway to the Northeast) and the Potomac River littoral from Rosslyn to Chain Bridge was filled with bars, casinos, vagrants, and threatening thugs and criminals. Outlaws hired by the beer hall owners actually climbed Mackey's Hill from the Potomac beaches and threatened his wife in her kitchen. No unarmed person, schoolchild nor farmer, could pass through Rosslyn without being harassed by these outlaws, and this was very bad for suburban development.¹³

Crandall Mackey was a newly elected prosecutor and resident of Mackey's Hill which overlooks the river and Spout Run. Frustrated with the poor enforcement of law and order, a group of citizens, notably Crandal Mackey, Frank Lyon (Lyon Park), Thomas Delashmutt, and William and Lemuel Marcey (a deputy sheriff)—all of the Northeast—formed a citizens' posse in 1904 (without much of a legal basis and with no support from the local sheriff) and raided the whiskey bars, gambling sites and brothels to begin to bring civil order. Their persistent actions and push for law and order and also a new train station at the head of Spout Run brought new confidence for developers. By 1920, suburban development had reached Spout Run and Windy Run in neighborhoods like Lyon Park, Woodmont, Maywood and Cherrydale. (Prosecutor Crandall Mackey's shot gun from that 1904 nighttime raid hung in the Arlington police station for decades.)

George D. Mitchell (Resident from 1905-1940). Mitchell was a successful publisher in Washington. He owned and edited the national weekly magazine, *Pathfinder News Magazine* (forerunner of *Time Magazine*), between 1887 and 1950.¹⁴ He was a friend and supporter of President Theodore Roosevelt's conservation efforts, and Mitchell, Admiral Rixey of Marymount on Glebe Road, and President Roosevelt visited the woods and farmland on Marcey Road many times during their horseback rides in the area. Mitchell bought eight acres from George Donaldson in 1905, and later he added 23 more acres when a Donaldson heir died. Mitchell turned the 30 acres of farmland into a nature center and conservation preserve between 1907 and 1930. George Mitchell's original 1905 house is the PORP Nature Center today. It is likely the first "conservation" project outside Washington for the region, and from this legacy grew the greenspaces of the Northeast today, where federal, county and private lands now account for some 700 acres of "natural" open space.¹⁵

Fannie C. “Cady” White (Resident from 1909-1959). White and her husband bought farmland in 1909 on Robert Donaldson’s 1840’s vintage farm, Fairview, from the latter’s son George. From 1909 until her death she owned and managed “White’s Orchards,” growing and selling cherries and apples on the north end of the old Donaldson. Importantly she also owned the private farm road in the middle of the ridge on her property. This road—now Marcey Road—had many names including Swimming Landing Road and Donaldson Run Road, but originally, it was called Old Mason Tract Outlet Road.¹⁶ (I cannot establish that she was related to the Donaldson’s or that she was kin to any of the extended riverine families of the 1900s.)

Dudley White, her husband, died soon after the orchard enterprise was started. All of the Donaldson’s lived nearby on the “old outlet road.” From the beginning, the Donaldson’s imported all of the building materials for the farm up from the Potomac River and hauled them up from Donaldson Run up the outlet road. Between 1886 and 1926, George and Webster Donaldson sold much of their 50 acres piecemeal to strangers. What is remarkable about Fannie White is that she spent 50 years buying back as much of the land as possible that the Donaldson’s had sold, including the Rock Spring (now called Indian Spring). She owned, as well, the “old outlet road” in the center of the north ridge. She died in 1959 with 35 acres in the north half of the old Fairview Farm (this half comprising the present PORP).

When George Donaldson died in 1926, he left “Cady (Fannie) White” his land for taking care of him through illness. She created a real estate holding company called “Potomac Reaches” for her accumulated orchard property. When she died in 1959, her land was woods and orchard, and no other residents on this old farm had been able to use her private road without her permission.¹⁷ She had used this privilege as a lever to expand her 35 acres of land. After her death in 1959, her family and partners resisted eminent domain condemnation until 1966.¹⁸ She is one half of the story of the unlikely development of today’s northeast Arlington which still has a 67-acre, mixed hardwood forest five miles from the center of Ballston.

Thomas Richards (Resident from 1948-2011). Richards was an Arlington County Board Member and Chairman through most of the 1960s. He lived in Woodmont and at 3838 N. 25th Street in Dover, near Phillips’ original settlement. Together with Fannie, Richards is the other half of the main story of conservation in the Northeast. Richards was a resident of the Northeast, as were his fellow board members and planning commission heads, Basil Delashmutt and Joe Fisher. Even though there were proposals for public hiking and nature trail parks along the Potomac as early as 1933, these were rejected since access to the National Mall and Rock Creek Park was deemed sufficient open space for

the region. At that time, most of Arlington's "Open Space" (school yards) was dedicated to active sports rather than conservation.¹⁹ The 1955 completion of the George Washington Parkway and the 1962 publication of Rachel Carson's "Silent Spring" changed the perceived tradeoffs of suburban development versus conservation.²⁰

Tom Richards picked up in 1962 where George Mitchell and President Roosevelt left off at the turn of the century. In 1962, Richards began a decade long effort to buy and preserve natural trails and parks along the streams of Northeast and south Arlington. Federal support and grants were forthcoming, and five to ten million dollars in county bonds were authorized for acquisition of park land for conservation. Arlington County bought or condemned more than 150 acres of forest and rough hiking trails in the Northeast, all proximate to the river and the new federal parkland where the old riverfront stone quarries had been, including Gulf Branch, Windy Run, Donaldson Run and Potomac Overlook Park, including Fannie White's 35 acres.

Northeast Paths, Roads, and Split-Stream Storm Sewers.

(Figure 3 on page 40, is keyed to the map.)²¹

The public landscape of the Northeast required, then and now, substantial civil engineering to serve the competing purposes of being open to suburbanization, while at the same time, protecting Potomac watersheds and preserving natural landscape. The steep inclines of the numerous watersheds challenged modern infrastructure and led to unique features of the public landscape in the Northeast. All of this civil engineering produced a surprising variety of neighborhood greenspace inventions that characterize the Northeast. For example, there are roads such as Spout Run that look like stream parks, greenspaces only running west to east along existing watersheds, and a surprising number of cul-de-sacs that defy any driver's efficiency. What follows is a little rundown on the most obvious and most historically interesting of these greenspaces.

The Civil War produced Military Road, and over the decades it expanded from a wagon track for military patrols and communication to the major south-north road of today. The US Army held and patrolled this road until 1934 when it was turned over to the county. Soldiers issued traffic summonses into the 1930s.²² Many of the streets leading from Military Road toward the river, like the old Beechwood Lane (See letter A for location on the Arlington map on page 40, Figure 3.) leading into the Donaldson Run watershed, were originally horse tracks used by U.S. Army patrols to ensure Confederates did not use the Potomac for invasion. These old federal rights of way provided Arlington County with historical easements for road development. The Beechwood right-of-way became a "proposed Yorktown Boulevard" and rests now within the



Arlington County Government Map, Notations by Charles Ludolph

Figure 3: Central Northeast Arlington region.

Donaldson Run and Marcey Road County Parks. But in 1952, this was a small component of the larger County plan to extend Yorktown Boulevard from Glebe Road west through Donaldson Run to a proposed George Washington Parkway interchange and make Yorktown Boulevard the access to a proposed Potomac Bridge reaching Washington at Arizona Avenue. (See letter B for location on the Arlington map on page 40, Figure 3.) In essence, Donaldson Run Park and PORP came very close to being a highway with a stream running through it, like today's Spout Run Parkway. Developers' confusion over the long-term intentions of the Arlington County government as to the tradeoffs between the

Yorktown Boulevard extension and Donaldson Run between 1941 and 1956 kept this central section of the Northeast undeveloped between 1941 and 1956.²³

Today when one walks north within PORP, Marcey Road becomes the eighteenth century farm lane it once was. This is likely the oldest interior road in northeast Arlington. Almost 200 years ago, this same track seems to have been a private road built by John Mason and has been the key to the pace of development in this section of the Northeast. (See letter C for location on the Arlington map on page 40, Figure 3.) The road is very old, and land deeds show that it dates well back to the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century. In fact, 200 years ago Marcey Road was originally a horse track called the "Old Mason Tract Outlet Road," It was likely cut through the Northeast wilderness by John Mason to help harvest timber. Mason was the landowner of the entire Northeast, and he then bought part of "Glebe Farm" from Christ Church, Alexandria. The Outlet Road was key to the area because it connected the interior to the river at the mouth of Donaldson Run. In the nineteenth century, Spout Run and Donaldson Run were keys to development of the area as they provided the only ingress to and egress from and the Potomac. (All the other creeks ended with cliffs at least twenty feet above river level.)

So this is no ordinary road. It explains why the early Marcey and Donaldson farms were located as they were. Title to this private road passed to the Marceys and the Donaldsons when they bought the Mason tracts around 1840. For most of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, access to the outlet road on their properties was restricted by the Donaldson family. Robert and then George Donaldson, his son, were known to deny use of the farm track to the unrelated land owners at the north end of the promontory nearest the river. Non-family landowners there could only get access to their land from the Donaldson Run ravine 250 feet below their property and over a steep 300 yard footpath.

Therein lays an important aspect of the development of the Northeast and the basis for the undeveloped character of the land. Between 1948 and 1974, Fannie White and family continued this private road restriction that attached to her properties and this made the land impossible to exploit by real estate developers. Fannie White used this leverage between 1910 and 1959 to reassemble much of the property around the "Old Mason Tract Outlet Road" that George Donaldson had sold off in pieces between 1886 and 1920.

Elsewhere in the Northeast, some streams were paths for development in the region and dictated where roads were needed. For example, in the late 19th century, Spout Run, Windy Run and Donaldson Run were well known public swimming spots. High above the river, the forest gave shaded relief from urban heat, and Washingtonians sent their children to summer camp at the YMCA where the Hoffman-Boston Woodlawn School is today. This YMCA

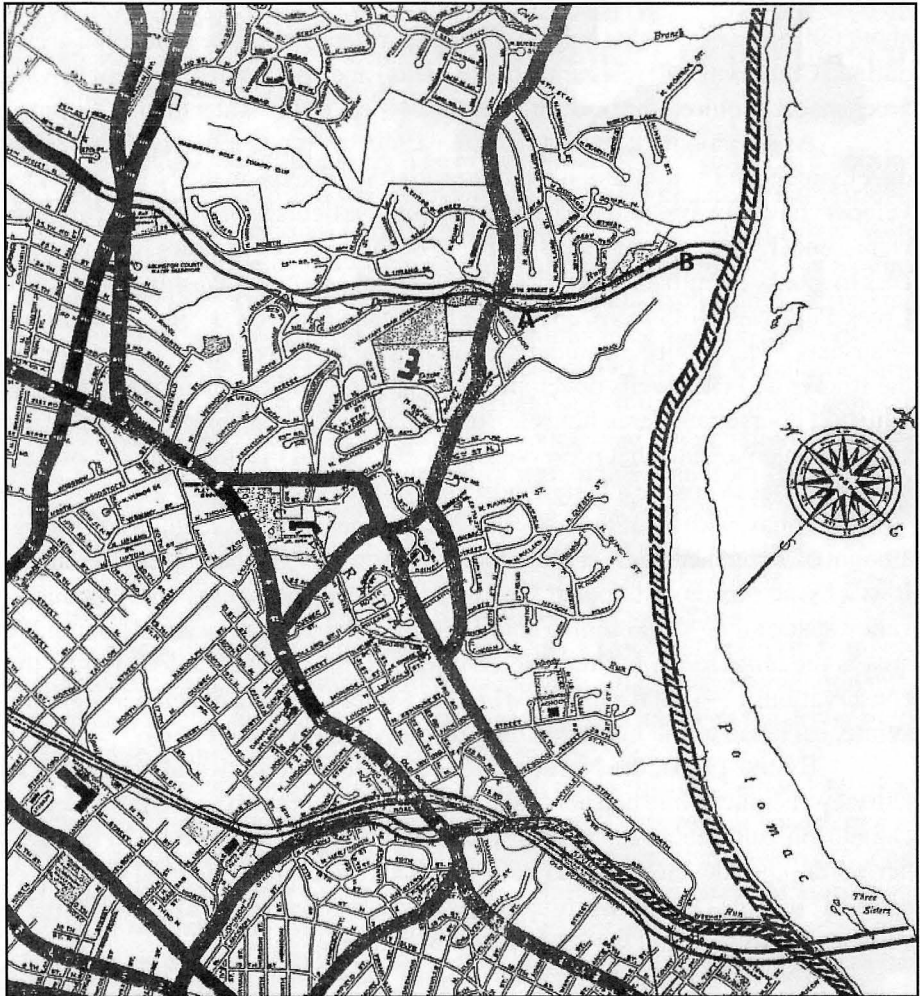
was located on the headwaters of both Windy Run and Donaldson Run, and children would canoe from the boathouses in the city to the Arlington river bank and then hike into the Northeast forest along these streams. Today, "Vacation Lanes" radiate from H-B Woodlawn School southeast and northeast on top of large storm-sewers that channel the springs and groundwater of these streams into the Potomac. (See letter D for location on the Arlington map on page 40, Figure 3.)

The most difficult stream to engineer in the Northeast was the smallest—Marcey Creek. The headwaters of Marcey Creek were above the Taylor School and on, the way to the Potomac, combined with the Marcey family water spring above Military Road on Robert Walker Place and other tributaries in the Dover neighborhood. In 1958, Arlington County diverted all of the headwater branches of Marcey Creek into storm sewers ultimately emptying into the Potomac miles away, thereby opening all of Marcey town and Dover for suburban development. The Rixey Branch of the Marcey watershed required a three-acre green space between North 26th and Marcey Road, where the storm sewer easement is substantial. It is owned by a private association of residents but is untaxed. (See letter E for location on the Arlington map on page 40, Figure 3.) This split-stream storm sewer feeds the 100-yard Marcey Creek in the southeast corner of Potomac Overlook Regional Park. (See letter F for location on the Arlington map on page 40, Figure 3.) The other smaller branch of Marcey Creek travels under Military Road at North 25th street into a green space behind 2599 Military Road and then flows through to find the watershed for the length of the 4100 block of North 27th Street. This stream then joins Randolph Street where the old Phillips estate fresh water spring house was at the intersection of North 27th street and Randolph, and then proceeds down Randolph to the south side of PORP and empties into the Potomac. All these springs are still active in times of drought and flood and require steady civil engineering repairs as nature shifts the stream beds over time. (See the four pioneer springs at "S" on the Arlington map on page 40, Figure 3.)

More Northeast greenspace was created by outlots that were too small to develop and that are remnants of the old nineteenth century local farms. Quebec Park has a quarter acre greenspace outlot surrounding it established by the Northern Virginia Conservancy Trust (NVCT). The same NVCT protects the greenspace around Beechwood Circle that once contained the residences of two of the Marcey brothers in the 20th century. There is a 20-foot-wide half-acre of greenspace outlots behind the entire 2300/2400 block of North Quebec. (See letter G for location on the Arlington map on page 40, Figure 3.) This used to be the 1866 wagon trail that provided access to the Phillips estate and that later connected North Randolph Street to Nelly Custis Drive in 1952. The track was

too narrow for automobiles and the County gave the road to the Quebec Street property owners. The land is undeveloped, but the old Phillips estate's elm trees still stand sheltering a small herd of deer that live there.

Another half-acre outlot is the County's public alley at 2549 Military Road dropping down from the bus stop on Military Road and overlapping the Marcey Creek storm sewer easement. Like the Randolph Street example mentioned in the paragraph above, this was the old narrow North 26th Street that provided access to many small Marcey family land holdings on the ridge line.



Arlington County Highway Study, 1956

Figure 4: Proposed Arlington Highway Map.

But in this case, the resulting alley is owned by the County and is not taxed. It was made into a public footpath connecting North 27th Street and the new Dover neighborhood to Military Road. (See letter H for location on the Arlington map on page 40, Figure 3.)

Parks and Greenspaces

Something that distinguishes the Northeast from the rest of Arlington is that more than twenty percent of the land in the six square miles of Northeast Arlington is natural-habitat—greenspace, as opposed to the more prevalent recreational open space, roads or school land elsewhere. Altogether there are about 600 acres of wooded habitat (federal parkland, resource protection areas, outlots, Conservancy Trusts and county parks) and another 100 acres of private greenspaces required for purifying the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

As development accelerated after 1940, it has never been clear whether development and conservation could successfully coexist in the Northeast. Developers have always held that Arlington, and particularly northeast Arlington, were “underbuilt.” In the 1930s and 1940s, the county for years held that access to grassy suburban backyards, the National Mall, and Washington’s Rock Creek Park was all that citizens needed in open space. By 1900, Donaldson’s “Fairview” was at once a commercial orchard and nature center. In the 1940’s, the Rixeys and Grunwells developed the upper Glebe section of the Northeast with golf courses and large houses. But they also sought to enforce homeowner association covenants that preserved trees throughout the development of Bellevue in order to ensure a leafy landscape.

Today, with all of the suburban development, there remains a substantial amount of watershed land set aside for erosion control and habitat conservation. It was by no means certain that George Mitchell’s original vision of a conservancy space along the Potomac could prevail. But what now stands out in the area is the large forest in Potomac Overlook Regional Park. Interestingly, the conservationist—Tom Richards, Arlington County, and the developer—Fannie White, each had a role in establishing the large park we have today.

By the 1940s, the Northeast was still largely empty and wooded. On Fairview, Fannie White had her first fifteen acres of orchard gained from George Donaldson, and she was using her access rights for the outlet road to block to her north other developers who held 15-25 acres. Until the federal bulldozers came to build the George Washington Parkway, neither owner’s nor developer’s vehicles could pass and the land went undisturbed.

The forty acres at the south end of Donaldson’s Fairview bordering Marcey Creek and Donaldson Run, where the tennis courts and community pool are today, were also bought by developers in the 1930s and 1940s. But that

development was complicated by Arlington County's official transport master plan for the Northeast which included many large new roads and boulevards to accommodate the heavy urbanization and development of Arlington.²⁴ A part of this plan (See Figure 4, page 43.) was a proposed Arizona Avenue River Bridge from Donaldson Run and Fairview Farm crossing the Potomac to Arizona or Nebraska.

Avenues in Washington.²⁵ The bridge would be serviced by an extension of Yorktown Boulevard and was intended to relieve the outdated Chain Bridge. By the late 1950s, regional plans for more roads and Potomac bridges were abandoned. Arlington County Board Chairman Tom Richards and the County Board turned these rights of way into the narrow Donaldson Run Park running east to west from the river to the county maintenance facility on North 26th and Glebe. Still developers who held the south end of the old Donaldson farm nearest Military Road could not develop that land which went from proposed roads to proposed park. So between Fannie White and the phantom Yorktown Boulevard, development was stymied. During all of this time from 1940 to 1973, the seventy acres of Donaldson's farmland and the thirty acres of the Donaldson watershed grew a forest and by 1974 became a park.

Conclusions and Further Research

The Northeast of Arlington is essentially a palisade of cliffs that mostly guaranteed isolation for centuries. At the same time, this area was predominantly a watershed that connected it to the outside world and has been the driver of its history at least through the 1950s.

Northeast Arlington has lived through more "history" since 1940 than the preceding 300 years. The last written history of this region was shared in 1959 by a descendent of Robert E. Lee—Eleanor Lee Templeman—in her book, *Arlington Heritage*. Her history was in the form of "vignettes" of significant historical residents, including her family—the Lees and Custises.

This modest account of the history of the northeast Arlington area has examined how the landscape visions of some shaped what we see today. It shows how accidental is today's Northeast landscape. It shows that the rough terrain only grudgingly gave way to visions of development and conservation.

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It proves that neither has gained the upper hand nor established a stable balance.

In the old days, most original settlers and land owners lived west of the watersheds, hugging Glebe Road, and the Northeast remained heavy forest. In the 1940s, new suburban owners grappled with the watersheds. Development had to create greenspace to make way for suburbanization. These greenspaces developed out of the landscape visions of a few people who were both developers and conservationists.

Fannie White, Robert Phillips and Tom Richards were very important but they did not control the outcome of their efforts. What they did was start the dialogue between development and conservation in the Northeast that is still unfolding. New demands of climate change and large mansions are being made. Homeowners and naturalists and hydrologists are still trying to get the difficult character of the Northeast watersheds right.

The most interesting and contentious road in the Northeast and perhaps one of the oldest in Arlington is Marcey Road. This road was strategically placed in early Arlington history. In the early 1800s it was called “Old Mason Tract Outlet Road.” It was little more than a horse path and a simple farm lane. But it was the only way to get in and out of North Arlington from the river opening at the mouth of Donaldson Run. Throughout the nineteenth century, Donaldson Run was the only creek bed that broke through the cliffs at river level. It is an underappreciated landscape star in a suburban wilderness.

The Northeast’s dense past still needs to reveal who Fannie White was and where the old Mason tract outlet road went through the rest of Arlington. Much more needs to be revealed on the extended network of families and workers that populated the Potomac River north of Key Bridge over the last 200 years. The Masons, the Fletchers, the Butts, the Donaldsons and the Whites all lived on the water’s edge for decades, but more needs to be known about their way of life and their contributions to the region’s history.

Endnotes

¹ Author’s estimate of greenspace acreage with parks and resource protection areas (RPAS) in Arlington’s Northeast drawn from Arlington County website of interactive GIS Maps. See <http://gis.arlingtonva.us/gallery> and click on icon “Real Estate Map” showing public and private greenspace and development. Also at same gallery go to “Watershed and Resource Protection Areas: Watershed Boundaries for Arlington County VA.” Both of these maps show detailed status of development by each land parcel as well as links to real estate records.

² Arlington County government surveys its environment and produces a tree canopy map available on the internet. It is the “Arlington County Coverage Map: 2011” at www.arlingtonenvironment.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Arl-Canopy/Analysis-Small-2011.pdf.

³ The history of Glebe Road itself, first called “the Road to the Falls” is summarized in Eleanor Lee Templeman’s *Arlington Heritage*, 1959. Page 52. The 1840ish etching of Chain Bridge in her chapter is close to the same as that owned by the author and reproduced as the frontpiece to this article.

⁴ This detail of the Arlington Northeast is part of an 1878 Map analyzed by C.B. Rose in “The Map of Arlington in 1878 – Places and People” in *Arlington Historical Magazine*: Volume 2, No 2, page 17. It shows the main features of Arlington and most major landowners at that time.

⁵ US Bureau of Census, Population Division, *Population of Counties by Decennial Censuses, 1790-1990: Maryland, 1995 and C.B. Rose, ibid.*

⁶ John Mason inherited all Northeast Arlington from his father, George Mason of Gunston Hall, including the six square miles along the Potomac from Rosslyn to Chain Bridge discussed in this article. He owned and lived on Theodore Roosevelt Island and had a mill at Spout Run and a ferry to Georgetown. Later he bought half of the Glebe Farm. He was bankrupt in 1833 and forced to sell his holdings.

⁷ See Templeman’s *Arlington Heritage* for short family histories of all these early nineteenth century landowners. Most bought their land from the bankruptcy commissioners over the John Mason tract.

⁸ Thoreau’s famous 1850 lecture “Walking” covering wildness and wilderness is found at page 192 in R. Finch and J. Elder (eds.). *The Norton Book of Nature Writing*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002.

⁹ The concept that originally “wilderness” was seen as “evil” and over time became something to venerate is discussed at length in *The Wilderness Debate Rages On: Continuing the Great New Wilderness Debate*, by J. Callicott and Michael Nelson, University of Georgia Press, 2008.

¹⁰ Phillips was the great, great, great-grandson of one of the Puritan founding fathers of Boston, Reverend George Phillips. He was a strict Congregationalist in the America of the late nineteenth century era that was changing rapidly around him. As a developer he did not understand the growing support for Henry David Thoreau’s “divinity in the wilderness,” or later the national support for John Muir’s and President T R Roosevelt’s conservation movement. Urbanization and farmland were Phillips’ landscape vision inherited from his Puritan upbringing. In many ways, his strict Originalism was overtaken by a new independent American culture. For example, in 1638 his colonial founding forefather, Reverend George Phillips, was certain of the rightness of condemning the Puritan preacher, Anne Hutchinson (America’s first feminists), as a heretic for her outspoken independence (Anne’s story was symbolically represented as the character Hester Prynne in Nathaniel Hawthorne’s 1850 story, *The Scarlet Letter*). Anne was banished from Boston to the Bronx in New York without firearms, where she and most of her family were massacred by Indians. One daughter, Susanna, was kidnapped by the Indians, but survived because of the novelty of her red hair. She was rescued and had many children. Her descendants, Oliver Wendell Holmes and Stephen Douglas came together in 1880 Washington society with Phillips. Likely they met at clubs and social events.

¹¹ Templeman, *Arlington Heritage*. *Op.cit.*

¹² Classified Advertisement, *Washington Star*, June 3, 1906 page 15. “10 acres of land west Potomac, a grand gorge similar to Watkins Glen, NY. An ideal site for a resort for boatmen and boating parties. 1 ¼ miles from Aqueduct Bridge, R.A. Phillips, 1406 G Street NW.”

¹³ Michael Lee Pope, *Shotgun Justice: One Prosecutor’s Crusade Against Crime and Corruption in Alexandria and Arlington*. Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2012.

¹⁴ Graham Patterson, Publisher, “A Man Who Started Something,” Memorial editorial on George C. Mitchell. In the January 25, 1950 issue of *Pathfinder News Magazine*. See www.OldMagazineArticles.com.

¹⁵ Records from NOVA Nature Center at Potomac Overlook Regional Park on Marcey Road.

¹⁶ Fannie and Dudley White bought their first property on Marcey Road in 1909 from Percival Davies who bought it in 1893 from George Donaldson. See *Arlington Deedbook* 119 page 424. The deeds are key to

understanding the how Fannie and the Donaldson's before her controlled the real estate for over 175 years. The deeds at Liber Deedbook C4, page 198 (1887), and Liber H-4, page 150 "bestow the right of ingress and egress to the Donaldson family owners" and that "all lots will have an outlet over the Road delineated in the Plat." This right of access was controlled from deed to deed over generations within the family and longtime owners like Fannie.

¹⁷ This "woman's horse trail which blocked some key post-war suburban development" around Dover and Fairview was the suburban myth in my neighborhood that started this little history. Happily, it turned out to be more than true. Access to Fannie's private road was key to the development of the north end of the Fairview land and for what is PORP today. The Northeast is riddled with "horse trails" and more on their historical origin will be presented in the next section on paths.

¹⁸ The Potomac Overlook Regional Park is essentially the original tract that Robert H. Donaldson bought in 1842 from Smith and Nicolls, Commissioners of sale from the bankrupt Mason estate. The purchase is recorded in Liber U No 3, folio 519, in the Arlington County Courthouse 6th Floor. Like many deeds of the nineteenth century, it contains property maps, legal definitions of ownership, records of eminent domain and some personal family and financial information. This deed locates the two original springs of the Fairview Farm (Rock Spring and the Eliza Donaldson spring. All are helpful to the curious historian' where family records are lacking. It was also helpful that the Arlington County wills and probate office is on the same floor, and Fannie White's and the Donaldson family wills were available for inspection.

¹⁹ Arlington County, Virginia, *Open Space Master Plan, Adopted by Board, September 10, 1994*. See also "History of Arlington's Open Space," drawn from Letzler and Hughes' "History of the Park System in Arlington County."

²⁰ See Charlie Clark, "Our Man in Arlington" column of June 2-8, 2016 in the *Falls Church News Press*, page 17. Also Thomas W. Richards, et al. *The Witver Legacy*, pp 205-211.

²¹ Partial detail of 2016 Arlington real estate map with authors' highlighting of key features gleaned from a variety of sources. See <http://gis.arlingtonva.us/gallery> and click on icon "Real Estate Map" showing public and private greenspace and development.

²² "Military Road (Arlington Virginia)," *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*. Internet. Also "Military Road No Speedway" *The Washington Post*, July 3, 1909.

²³ Highway Division, Dept. of Public Service, Arlington County, *Highway Study and Priority Ratings*, December 1956, and Mary Jane Schad "Marceytown," Self-Published article. May 1968. Available upon request at the Arlington County Central Library, Local History Room among a collection of papers on the Marceys. Schad includes oral history but also asked her Marcey family relatives to draw maps of Marceytown and the predecessor property to the NOVA PORP. They all refer to roads and trails going into Donaldson Run as late as 1938 that have long disappeared including Beechwood Lane. All the Springs are located in land deeds notably, the deed partitioning the farm among the four children of Robert Donaldson.

²⁴ Highway Division, Dept. of Public Service, Arlington County, *Highway Study and Priority Ratings*, December 1956, page 4 and maps following.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

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About the Author

Charles M. Ludolph is a 49 year resident of Arlington. He received a BA from Georgetown University and Doctorate from George Washington University. He researches and writes extensively on Virginia and Tennessee history of the late 18th, early 19th and 20th century. The Virginia Tidewater region has his frequent attention as well as the cultural evolution of the Potomac. He and his family enjoy hiking the trails of Northeast Arlington and the Potomac shores.
